

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 OES-05 PC-05 USIA-15 IO-10 INR-07

DODE-00 AGR-10 INT-05 COME-00 EB-07 /130 W

----- 048376

R 061612Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7120

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS COTONOU 589

AFDROUGHT

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: COTONOU/PARAKOU DELIVERY LINE WEEKLY REPORT II

REFS: A) STATE 089835

B) COTONOU 573

C) COTONOU 510

ROME FOR FODAG (APRIL 27- MAY 3)

1. PLEASE NOTE THAT REPORTING PERIOD NOW SUNDAY THROUGH SATURDAY RATHER THAN MONDAY THROUGH SUNDAY. INFORMATION MORE ACCESSIBLE ON THIS BASIS, AND CA LES CAN BE SENT CLOSER TO THE REPORTING PERIOD.

2. DURING REPORTING PERIOD 73 MT OF FOOD AID AND 619 MT OF ESSENTIAL COMMERCIAL FOODSTUFFS WERE EVACUATED FROM COTONOU PORT FOR A TOTAL OF 692 MT ESSENTIAL FOODSTUFFS REPRESENTING 32 PERCENT OF RAIL CAPACITY. THIRTY-ONE MT OF THE COMMERCIAL FOODSTUFF AND NONE OF THE RELIEF GOODS WERE EVACUATED BY TRUCK. AN AVERAGE OF 10MT RELIEF GOODS PER DAY WERE EVACUATED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD.

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COMMENT: THE FIGURES MAKE SUPERFLUOUS THE ANALYSIS OF COMMIT-

MENT PROMISED PARA 6 REF (B).

3. DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD, 2546 MT TOTAL GOODS INCLUDING 312 MT FOOD AID WAS EVACUATED FROM PARAKOU. AS OF MAY 2 STOCKS THERE IN WAREHOUSES AND LOADED WAGONS CONSISTED OF 2476 MT GENERAL GOODS, 809 MT ESSENTIAL COMMERCIAL FOOD AND 164 MT FOOD AID. REPORTS OF OVER 100 CARS SIDELINED THE PREVIOUS WEEK WERE TRUE; OCDN STAFF AT PARAKOU SEEM FATALISTIC ABOUT THE SITUATION: IF NIGER DECIDES TO SEND ENOUGH TRUCKS TO CARRY INCOMING RAIL TRAFFIC, OPERATIONS RUN SMOOTHLY ("SMOOTHLY" IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS ABOUT 40 WAGONS SIDELINED IN PARAKOU - I.E. ABOUT TWO DAYS ARRIVALS); IF NOT, RAILCARS ARE SIDELINED. AN INCREASE IN RATES AS OUTLINED PARA 2 REF (B) IS SAID TO BE NECESSARY TO MAKE RELIEF SHIPMENTS ATTRACTIVE TO PRIVATE TRUCKERS IN WHAT IS FOR THEM SELLER'S MARKET. THE SITUATION SHOULD BE SLIGHTLY EASED BY THE FACT THAT COTTON SHIPMENTS ARE STARTING TO SCALE DOWN THEREBY MAKING MORE WAREHOUSE SPACE AVAILABLE AND PERMITTING FREIGHTCARS TO UNLOAD AND MAKE THE RETURN TRIP EVEN IF TRUCKS ARE NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO RECEIVE GOODS. THERE ARE APPARENTLY NO LABOR PROBLEMS, AND NO SHORTAGE OF WORKERS. OCDN REPORTEDLY HAS 300 WORKERS AT PRESENT, AND 100 MORE AVAILABLE WHENEVER NEEDED. FUTURE REPORTS WILL INDICATE THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF WAGONS SIDELINED IN PARAKOU PER DAY.

4. AS OF MAY 6, 2876 MT FED SORGHUM, 143 MT CARE BISCUITS, 846 MT COMMERCIAL WHEAT FLOUR, 1378 MT COMMERCIAL SUGAR AND 7000 MT COMMERCIAL SALT WERE IN COTONOU PORT BOUND FOR NIGER PLUS 561 MT UNICEF ICSM FOR MALI. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FED SORGHUM HAS NOT BEEN TOUCHED SINCE LAST WEEK THEREBY PRESERVING VALIDITY OF OPTION 3 PARA 3 REF (C) OF SUBSTITUTING FED SORGHUM.

5. COMMENT: THIS WEEK'S FIGURES CONFIRM PORT CLEARANCE DIFFICULTIES THAT REF (B) ANTICIPATED WOULD BE CAUSED BY NIGER'S DECISION TO GIVE RELIEF FOOD NO PRIORITY OVER ESSENTIAL COMMERCIAL FOODSTUFFS. THEY ALSO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT UNLESS NIGER ACCORDS A HIGHER PRIORITY TO MALIAN RELIEF GOODS THAN TO ITS OWN, GAO WILL NOT BE SUPPLIED BEFORE AUGUST 1 DEADLINE. THE THRUST OF THIS CABLE AND ITS REFERENCES IS NOT THAT GAO CANNOT BE SUPPLIED THROUGH COTONOU BEFORE THE RAINS, BUT THIS GOAL UNLIKELY TO BE REALISED IF WE SIMPLY LET THINGS TAKE THEIR COURSE. RATHER, SOME KIND OF UNCLASSIFIED

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EXCEPTIONAL MEASURE GIVING MALIAN SHIPMENTS PRIORITY IS CALLED FOR IF GRAIN IS ACTUALLY NEEDED IN GAO BEFORE THE NEXT HARVEST. REF (C) SUGGESTS THREE ALTERNATIVES TO THIS END. FFP OFFICER PEARSON HAS MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSSHIPMENT OF SORGHUM ALREADY STOCKPILED IN NIAMEY AS ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE ALTHOUGH THE FAILURE OF OCDN TO MOVE NIGER STOCKS OUT OF COTONOU PORT AT THE ANTICIPATED RATE DAILY REDUCES THE PRACTICABILITY OF THIS SUGGESTION. NO DOUBT THERE ARE OTHER MECHANISMS WHEREBY THE SAME END COULD BE

ACHIEVED. MOST OF THOSE SUGGESTED TO DATE REQUIRE COOPERATION AND NEGOTIATION BY SOMEONE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGER. MALIANS MAY FIND ABOVE INFORMATION USEFUL IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH NIGER.

6. OTHER POSSIBILITY IS TO HANDLE GAO SHIPMENTS WITH MALIAN OR THIRD-COUNTRY TRUCKS. ESTIMATE THAT APPROXIMATELY 40 TWENTY-FIVE-TON CAPACITY TRUCKS NEEDED FOR TWO MONTHS TO DO THE JOB.
ENGLE

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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